

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04000979

Date Listed: 9/17/2004

Lewistown Satellite Airfield

Historic District (Boundary Increase)

Fergus

MT

Property Name

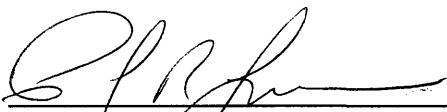
County

State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

9/17/04

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Current Function:

The current function is revised to read: *Transportation / Air-related.*

Material:

The wall materials are amended to add: *Asbestos*

These clarifications were confirmed with the MT SHPO office.

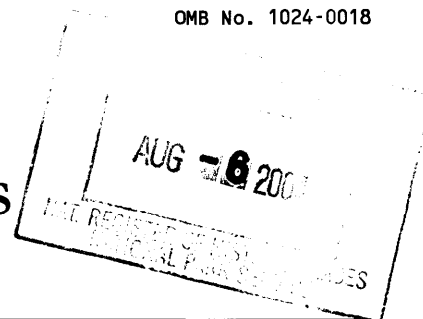
DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name: Lewistown Satellite Airfield Historic District (Boundary Increase)

other name/site number: Lewistown Airdrome; Lewistown Airport/24FR0851

2. Location

street & number: Highway 87

not for publication: na

vicinity: na

city/town: Lewistown

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Fergus

code: 027

zip code: 59457

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
 ☐ see continuation sheet
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
 ☐ see continuation sheet
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
 ☐ see continuation sheet
☐ removed from the National Register
 ☐ see continuation sheet
☐ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

9/17/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public - Local

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

Category of Property: District

117 building(s)

Number of contributing resources previously

00 sites

listed in the National Register: 6

20 structures00 objects

Name of related multiple property listing: na

137 TOTAL**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions: DEFENSE/air facility

Current Functions:

DEFENSE/air facility

7. Description**Architectural Classification:****Materials:**

OTHER: World War II Temporary Buildings

foundation:

CONCRETE

walls:

METAL; BRICK

roof:

METAL

other:

BRICK

Narrative Description

The Lewistown Satellite Air Field Historic District is located along U.S. Highway 87 about one mile southwest of Lewistown, Montana. The airfield sits on level ground before the highway drops down into the town. It now serves as the Lewistown/Fergus County Airport. The Historic District listed on March 8, 2000 is located in the northwest corner of the airport and includes the six buildings associated with the flight apron functions of the airfield during its period of significance. Within the boundaries of the listed portion of the district only one building has been removed since the period of significance: a Guard House located just to the southeast of the Bombsight Storage building. Three, newer buildings exist within the current district boundaries.

The proposed boundary increase area extends from the current district boundary lines to the south and east to encompass previously unrecorded buildings and structures associated with the Lewistown Airfield and its operations as a U.S. Army Air Corps training facility. While the existing historic district encompasses those buildings associated with the flight apron functions of the airfield, the historic resources within the increase area functioned as training areas, storage and maintenance buildings, and utilities intrinsic to the overall mission and operation of the U.S. Army Air Corps facility. The increase area extends from the southeast side of "A" Avenue (currently called Aztec Drive), south of the B-17 hangar, to include the oil storage house and recreation hall. The new boundary line also runs in a southeasterly direction from the intersection of "A" Avenue (Aztec Drive) and First Street (now known as Stratosphere Drive) along the northeast side of First Street (Stratosphere Drive), then turns northeast to parallel the northwest side of "D" Avenue (Airport Road) to the pump house, then turns to the northwest to include the warehouses at the northwest side of "A" Avenue Aztec Drive).
(see continuation sheet)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Areas of Significance: **MILITARY**

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Period(s) of Significance: 1942-43

Significant Person(s): N/A

Significant Dates: 1942

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Howard R. Green Company,
Architects and Engineers/Askevold & Rudd and
S. Birch and Sons

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Lewistown Airfield Historic District Boundary Increase Area is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The district is significant for its association with the nation's and the U.S. Army Air Corps' military buildup during World War II. The Airfield was one of four facilities constructed for the U.S. Army Air Corps in Montana to train squadrons in navigation of the B-17 Flying Fortress and use of the top secret Norden Bombsight. As the U.S. Department of Defense systematically removes World War II "temporary" buildings under its control, these buildings gain additional significance for their representation of this important period in the nation's history. Six of the historic buildings associated with the Airfield were listed in the National Register on March 8, 2000. This nomination serves to expand the listed historic district area to include eleven additional contributing buildings and two contributing structures constructed and used by the U.S. Army Air Corps' training program at Lewistown Satellite Airfield.

Introduction¹

"They are our B-17s!"

That was the attitude held by the people of Central Montana in the dark days of World War II toward the planes and aircrews that operated out of the Lewistown Satellite Airfield for the Great Falls Air Base.

World War II came to Montana in earnest in 1942. The war was not going well for the Allies, and bombers and trained crews were desperately needed. An army air corps was established with Great Falls as its headquarters. Four training squadrons were included, one each in Great Falls, Cut Bank, Glasgow, and Lewistown.

Construction of the Lewistown Airfield began in July 1942. It was activated in October, and on November 28, the first B-17s piloted by the 49th Bombardment Squadron roared over Main Street with bomb bays open, circled over town, and landed at the newly built airfield. Almost 1,000 GIs were stationed at the base and were taken into the hearts of the townspeople. (see continuation sheet)

¹ Introduction by LeRoy Musik and Dave Byerly, Lewistown, March 1999. This introduction and history of the Lewistown Satellite Airfield Historic District comes directly from the original district nomination form on file at the Montana SHPO.

Lewistown Satellite Airfield Historic District (Boundary Increase)

Name of Property

Fergus County, MT

County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ previously listed in the National Register ☐ Other State agency
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register ☐ Federal agency
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark ☐ Local government
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____ ☐ University
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____ ☐ Other – Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 26 acres (increase area only)**UTM References:** See continuation sheet**Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)):** S ¼ NW ¼ and N ½ SW ¼ of Section 21, T15N, R18E, PM

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kate Hampton
organization: MTSHPO date: September 2003
street & number: 1410 8th Ave. telephone: (406)444-3647
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620-1202

name/title: Lon Johnson
organization: MTSHPO date: March 30, 1999
street & number: 1410 8th Ave.
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59620

Property Owner

name/title: Lewistown City-County Airport Board
street & number: 712 West Main Street telephone: 406-538-3264
city or town: Lewistown state: MT zip code: 59457

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The boundary increase area includes twelve previously unrecorded historic buildings and two structures that were either constructed or moved onto the grounds between the Fall 1942 and Spring 1943 for use by the U.S. Army Air Corps. With the exception of the motor repair building, each of these buildings and structures remain virtually unchanged in appearance since the period of significance and are contributing resources within the boundary increase area. Within the increase area are six modern, wood-framed, gable-front buildings with metal siding and roofing. For the most part, these modern buildings display large overhead garage doors at the façade as well as small metal-framed windows and metal pedestrian doors at the side elevations. Of varying size, these buildings blend in with the historic surroundings and are not overly intrusive within the district. Five are located along the northeast side of First Street, between the old hangar and the water tower. The other modern building is a warehouse at the north corner of "A" Avenue (Aztec Drive) and First Street (Stratosphere Drive), across from the old hangar. This warehouse is nearly identical in dimension as one built on that location during the period of significance.

Historic Building and Structure Descriptions

Oil Storage House Original Building No. 41, Serial Building No. 63 (1 contributing building, constructed 1942)

The oil storage house is a small, one-story glazed brick-block building with a side-gable roof. A shed extension, original to the building, is located across the front (northwest) elevation. A single door opening is located to the southwest side of the shed extension. Fenestration on the rest of the building is limited to single, four-over-four-light wood-frame double-hung windows centered beneath the gable ends on both the southwest and northeast elevations. A brick interior chimney protrudes from the northeast side of the shed roof slope. Bits of tarpaper still cover the roof, but for the most part, the horizontal plank sheathing is exposed. The interior of the building consists of two rooms separated by a thick masonry wall.

Motor Repair Building Original Building No. 38, Serial Building No. 60 (1 non-contributing building, constructed 1942)

The motor pool was originally a one-story, 32' by 88' rectangular building, but now features a modern shed-roofed, two-story addition to its southwest side. The building also features modern, vertical metal siding and a metal roof. The northwest (front) elevation originally provided access to five repair stalls, but now contains two overhead garage doors to the northeast side, a centered, gable roofed entry with a modern, one-light pedestrian door, and two, modern, one-by-one, metal-framed sliding windows to the southwest. The addition contains a larger one-by-one metal-framed sliding window at the second story level. The southwest elevation contains three one-by-one sliding, metal-framed windows across the first story, and two across the second story. The northwest elevation contains no fenestration. The southeast (rear) elevation contains two bays. The long, protruding bay to the southwest contains three sliding sash windows and a single one-light metal pedestrian door. The northwest bay contains a ribbon of three, four-light fixed windows high on the northwest end.

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Recreation Building Original Building No. 7, Serial Building No. 26 (1 contributing building, constructed 1942)
The recreation building is a large, one-story, gable-roofed, 40' x 132' rectangular building on a concrete slab foundation. It is located across the main airport road from the B-17 hangar. The exterior walls are covered with asbestos sheet siding, and the roof is covered with corrugated metal. The gable-front building faces northwest, and access is provided on the façade through five-panel wooden double-doors in a centered, gabled, enclosed entry. To the northeast of the pedestrian entrance is a large sliding wooden door. There is a two-over-two wood-framed double-hung window to the southwest side of the entry. Both the southwest and northeast elevations contain fourteen evenly-spaced four-light, fixed, wood-frame windows and centered, shed-roofed entries. The entries contain five-panel wooden double doors. The southeast (rear) elevation contains, from southwest to northeast a large, sliding wooden door, two two-over-two double-hung wood-frame windows, and a gable-roofed entry extension with a single wooden door. There are three tall brick interior chimneys evenly-spaced across the low side of both slopes of the main roof.

All-Purpose Shop Original Building No. 12, Serial Building No. 32 (1 contributing building, constructed 1942)
The all-purpose shop is located northeast of the previously-listed crew chief and armaments buildings, and rests on a concrete pad foundation. The one-story, rectangular building features asbestos sheet siding on the exterior walls and corrugated metal on the gabled roof. Other roof features include tall, interior brick chimneys at the northwest and southeast sides of the southwest slope and exposed rafter ends. Both the southeast (front) and northwest (rear) elevations contain large, vertical wood-plank sliding garage doors and a single four-light, fixed, wood-frame window. There are five windows, identical in style, across the southwest elevation. The northeast elevation contains no fenestration.

Pre-War Hangar (1 contributing building, moved to site c. 1939)

One of three buildings in the historic district that pre-date the U.S. Army Air Corp training operations, the pre-war hangar exhibits a gable roof, clipped at the front. At the rear, the southwest side of the building extends approximately ten feet beyond the northeast side. Although the hangar exhibits design details that belie its earlier construction date, the asbestos sheet siding on the exterior walls and corrugated roof match that of the World War II-era buildings. The northwest (front) elevation contains a centered, five-panel wooden pedestrian door flanked by a six-by-six sliding wood-frame window to the northeast and a pair of one-over-one-light double-hung windows to the southwest. Another pair of one-over-one double-hungs is located on the northwest side of the southwest elevation. The southwest elevation also boasts three massive sliding wooden doors across the southeast side. The doors each have six panels: the upper panels contain twenty lights each, and the lower panels are X-braced vertical wood plank. A pair of identical doors is centered on the northwest bay of the northeast elevation. The southeast bay of the northeast elevation is formed by the extension of the southwest half of the building, and contains no fenestration. There are no windows or doors on the southeast (rear) elevation.

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Training Building Original Building No. T-714 (1 contributing building, constructed Spring 1943)

The training building is a long rectangular building gable-roofed building on a concrete slab foundation. Corrugated metal covers the roof, and sheets of asbestos siding cover the exterior walls. The windows are eight-over-eight-light wood-frame, double-hung style. The building is oriented perpendicular to the main airport road, between the old hangar and the camouflage building. The entrance to the building consists of a small, shed-roofed enclosed entry with a centered five-panel wood pedestrian door on the northwest end of the northeast elevation. There are four windows evenly spaced between the entry and the center of the northeast elevation. A low-pitched shed roof extension envelops the southeast half of the northeast elevation. The extension contains three bays, two with six-light-over-six-panel side hinged garage doors and one with a single vertical-plank, side-hinged door. There are two window openings evenly spaced across the northwest elevation, and a wooden louvered vent centered in the gable end. Twelve window openings are evenly spaced across the southwest elevation. The southeast elevation contains no fenestration.

Camouflage Building Original Building No. T-718 (1 contributing building, constructed Spring 1943)

The camouflage building is a large, two-story rectangular building on a concrete pad foundation. The exterior walls are asbestos sheet siding and the gable roof is covered with corrugated metal. Windows throughout the building are nine-light, fixed, wood-frame style at the second story level and eight-over-twelve double-hung style at the first story. Two louvered, gabled rectangular cupolas provide ventilation at the ridgeline. The building faces northwest, and a pair of massive accordion-style folding doors dominate the façade. Both of these doors feature three x-braced panels in each of the five folding sections, and extend from ground level nearly to the eaveline. The southwest elevation features six windows across the northwest two-thirds of the building at the second story level and a large, wood-frame sliding garage door at the southeast end. This door is nearly two stories in height, and is constructed of cross-braced, diagonally-placed tongue-and-groove lumber. There are six windows across the northwest two-thirds of the northeast elevation at the second story. At the first story level, there is a large, centered shed extension that is nearly collapsed, and two windows are located toward the southeast end. The southeast (rear) elevation contains five evenly-spaced windows across the first story and two at the southwest side of the second story.

The interior of the building belies its function as a practice area for camouflaging airplanes and other equipment. The massive space is open to the rafters, except at the southeast end, where a workspace/office, accessed by catwalks, was located. The lumber framing for the work area remains, but a fire gutted the finish materials. The walls of the main area are covered with vintage pin-up posters and calendars. Several vintage airplanes and other equipment are scattered and suspended throughout the room.

Warehouses Original Building No. 11, Serial Building No. 30 and Original Building No. 11, Serial Building No. 31 (2 contributing buildings, constructed 1942)

There are two warehouse buildings located at the northeastern corner of the historic district, facing the main entrance road to the southeast. Each building measures 32' by 95' and rests on a concrete pad foundation. The wood-frame buildings are covered with asbestos sheet siding and feature shallow-pitched corrugated metal roofs.

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Both buildings feature an unusual roofline, in that the upper approximately three feet of the building overhangs the rest by a few inches, giving the appearance of a shoebox.

From the southwest to the northeast, the southeast (front) elevation of Building 11-30 contains a pair of modern vertical tongue-and-groove, side-hinged garage doors within an original opening, an original ribbon of six four-light, wood-frame, fixed windows, and a pair of vintage wood-frame double-hung windows that appear to have been installed at a later date. Both the southwest and northeast elevations contain no fenestration. The northwest (rear) elevation contains six, evenly-spaced, four-light, fixed wood-frame windows at the center.

Warehouse 11-31 features four-light, fixed, wood-frame windows. From right to left across the southeast (front) elevation there are: a pair of side-hinged, three-panel garage doors; a modern, metal overhead garage door; four windows; and another pair of three-panel, side-hinged garage doors. The southwest elevation contains no fenestration. There are three window openings on the northeast elevation: one at the southeast side of the first story, a boarded-over opening just off-center to the northwest, and a larger window to the northwest side in the gable end. The northwest (rear) elevation contains six windows evenly spaced at the center just below the overhang, another to the southwest, and one low on the northeast side. A single, brick, interior chimney punctuates the roofline low on the southwest side of the northwest slope.

Machine Shop (1 contributing building, constructed Spring 1943)

The machine shop is located south southeast of the training building, and north-northeast of the water tower. This 30' x 40' rectangular building displays the same asbestos sheet siding and corrugated metal roofing as the other 1942-1943-era buildings on the base. Constructed on a concrete pad foundation, the shop has a shallow gable roof with exposed 2" x 4" rafter ends. The southeast elevation (front) contains two pairs of wooden, diagonally-braced, side-hinged garage doors. Fenestration is limited to three evenly-spaced, wood-frame, fixed, four-light windows across both the northeast and southwest elevations.

Elevated Storage Tank (1 contributing structure, moved in 1942)

The tall metal water tower anchors the south-southeast portion of the district, and is located at the south end of First Street, at "D" Avenue. Originally constructed c. 1908 in Broadview, Montana, it was moved to the airfield in 1942. The cylindrical tank features a rounded bottom and conical top, and is painted with alternating white and red squares. The tank rests on four metal support beams that are horizontally braced and diagonally cabled. Where the supports meet the tank, a narrow metal catwalk and railing circle the tower. There is a small square platform surrounded by an inverted-v-braced railing balanced at the very top of the tower. Visible from a great distance on the prairie, the water tower stands over four stories in height, and has a 50,000-gallon storage capacity.

"Old" House (1 contributing building, moved in 1942)

This hipped-roofed residence measures 32' x 42' and was moved to its present location from a few hundred yards south of the airfield in 1942. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles, and the exterior walls are sided

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with narrow clapboard. Windows throughout the building are one-over-one-light wood-frame, double-hung style, unless otherwise noted. The building rests on a concrete foundation. The southeast (front) elevation features a centered, shed-roofed enclosed entry with a single, one-light wooden pedestrian door. Single, one-over-one light wood-frame double-hung windows flank the entry. The southwest elevation consists of two bays, the main house, and a small hipped extension to the northwest side. The southeastern bay contains two windows, and the northwest bay contains a single, centered window. The main bay of the northeastern elevation mirrors that of the southwest. The northwest extension bay, however, is covered on the northeast elevation by a small, shed-roofed addition. There is a single, centered, one-light entry door on the northeast wall of the addition. The northwest (rear) elevation contains three bays: the main house, the shed addition, and the hipped extension. The small portion of the main house that is exposed contains no windows or doors. A 1950s-vintage aluminum, multi-light window with hoppers at the bottom is centered in the shed addition bay. The northwest elevation of the hipped extension contains a single window. This window is similar to those throughout the house, but is the only one to display non-functional, decorative shutters.

Fire Pump House Original Building No. 31, Serial Building No. 49 (1 contributing building, constructed 1942) This small rectangular building is located at the southeastern corner of the district. Measuring only 12' x 20', it displays a shallow, side-gabled roof and a poured concrete foundation. Asbestos sheet siding covers the exterior walls, and corrugated metal covers the roof. The 2" x 4" gable ends are exposed. Windows throughout the building are four-light, fixed, wood-frame style. A small, front-gabled enclosed entrance is located at the northeast side of the southeast (front) elevation. A single wooden, vertical tongue and groove door provides entry to the one-room building. There is a single window at the southwest side of the façade, and a single window centered on both the southwest and northeast elevations. The northwest (rear) elevation displays two evenly-spaced windows. Small wooden, louvered vents are centered in each of the gable ends. A single, cylindrical metal stovepipe protrudes from the southwest side of the southeast roof slope. Inside the building, the original, massive pump equipment fills the room. There is a built-in cabinet at the southeast wall. Inside of the cabinet door are the handwritten names and hometown addresses of many servicemen who trained at the airbase.

Storage Reservoir Original Building No. 32, Serial Building No. 50 (1 contributing structure, constructed 1942) Though raised more than four feet above grade, earth and sod surround this structure so that only the metal, conical roof of this subterranean, cylindrical, concrete water storage tank is visible. The reservoir is approximately 30' in diameter, and like the water tower, had a 50,000 gallon storage capacity. A small circular hatch and interior wooden ladder provide access to the inside.

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Integrity

Overall, the integrity of the built environment within the boundary increase area is very high. Eleven of the twelve historic buildings remain virtually unchanged since the period of significance. The one altered building and six modern buildings, though non-contributing, are not overly intrusive. Indeed, they display the general rectangular forms, gable roofs, and metal finishes present on most of the contributing resources.

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Squadrons would fly into Lewistown for one to three months of training in the open skies of Montana. The air crews would train day and night in all kinds of weather. Training combined navigation, bombing and gunnery practice, with familiarizing crews with all aspects of the B-17, each learning the jobs of other crew members of the plane. They would fly to "targets" in Montana, Washington, or Minnesota.

One building at the Lewistown Airfield kept under 24-hour guard was the Norden Bombsight building. There, the top-secret Norden bombsight was stored. Lewistown's B-17 crews would train with the bombsight, after which it was carefully removed and returned under guard from the building.

The crews that trained in Lewistown would, when finished, fly directly to the air war in Europe. Many of these young men --- who worked at the airfield and danced with local girls on the weekends, who made friends around town, who married local girls --- never came home. Casualties among the bomber squadrons were terribly high, and the need for new crews unrelenting.

The Lewistown Airfield operated for 12 months, and was then deactivated.

Lewistown Satellite Air Field

During the dark days of World War II after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the allies sustained major defeats around the world. The United States Congress responded with massive defense appropriations. Included in the appropriations was \$200 million for airport development across the country. Plans called for the construction of 164 new airports and improvements to 266 existing facilities.²

Rumors that a satellite airfield would be built at Lewistown reached that community soon after selection of the Great Falls location in April 1942. Although no formal announcement was made until the end of July, by the middle of June 1942, the City of Lewistown was putting its municipal airport affairs in order. The county agreed to assume equal responsibility for the airport, and management of the facility's affairs came under a three-member commission. The new commission immediately paid off the indebtedness owed 17 local business men and firms who had provided funds to light the runways in 1939. A visit from CAA and army engineers in mid-July fueled speculation about the Lewistown airport's future. Finally at the end of July, R.H. Johnson, representing the Howard R. Green Company, Architects and Engineers of Cedar Rapids Iowa, announced development work would begin at the airport. Citing government censorship requests, Johnson only confirmed that the army planned to build a hangar and a number of barracks. The newspaper quoted him as saying, "Our job is to get the hangar and barracks built as quickly as possible and get out of here." The airport commission immediately turned control of the airport over to the United States of America for the term of the war.³

² *Lewistown Democrat-News*, May 25, 1942.

³ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, May 25, June 16, and July 3, 13, 29, 31, 1942

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The War Department issued the first contracts for airfield development less than a week later. On August 6, it announced that S. Birch and Sons Construction Company of Great Falls would undertake site work, including grading, excavating, drainage, paving and boundary fences at a price of between \$1 million and \$5 million. Askevold & Rudd, also of Great Falls, received a contract to construct temporary frame buildings at Lewistown and Cutbank at a cost of between \$100,000 and \$500,000. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assigned staff from its Fort Peck office to oversee the construction projects.⁴

The extent of the U.S. Army's plans at Lewistown remained a secret. The on-site engineers informed the local newspaper that all news releases would come out of Fort Peck, and censorship regulations prohibited them from providing information. All private and commercial airline flights to Lewistown were halted in late August. Warned against "any extended mention of [the Army's] activities," the *Lewistown Democrat-News* did occasionally report on construction work visible from the highway in front of the airfield. The paper mentioned the raising of "huge roof trusses atop the immense concrete hangar" in October, and that heavy equipment also was visible working all over the airfield grounds. The arrival of a shipment of army cots fueled speculation about the size of the unit to be stationed at the airfield.⁵

The Army finally granted a local newspaper reporter a tour of the airfield in mid-October. The reporter inspected a completed barracks, the hospital, and the mess hall. He concluded "that the boys who will inhabit this little settlement on the hill will be comfortable to the Nth degree." The tour ended with a look at the hangar, but "no intimate questions were asked, as this is wartime, but take it from this reporter, all may be proud of what Lieutenant Sommers [the construction superintendent] and his crew are doing on the hill."⁶

By November 1, 1942, the Army Air Corps had accepted the completed Lewistown Satellite Airfield. Captain George W. Darnell was placed in command of the field, and the first 100 Army Air Corpsmen had arrived at the airfield. A full force of between 800 and 1,000 men would eventually be stationed in Lewistown.

The Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri River Division of Engineering, provided the local newspaper with a description of the "magnitude of the army's engineering accomplishment at [the] Lewistown Airdrome and on similar projects over [the] area." From the beginning of construction in August until the Army Air Corps acceptance of the airfield three months later, the contractors completed what in fact was a small city. The army had constructed in two to three months what under ordinary circumstances would have taken a year to build. Water, sewer, and electrical systems to supply the airfield were planned and installed, and to stay on schedule, for example, during the paving of runways, 150 train carloads of material were required each day. The Division of Engineering described its construction program as the "battleground of the homefront" and employees worked

⁴ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, August 7 and 20, 1942.

⁵ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, August 20, 25 and October 8, 17, 1942.

⁶ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, October 18, 1942.

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under the motto of "Make no decisions that will not speed to a successful and efficient [sic] end, the job you are assigned."⁷

Mission of the Lewistown Satellite Airfield

The Lewistown Satellite Airfield in coordination with the main Army Air Corps base at Great Falls and the other satellite airfields at Glasgow and Cutbank trained crews to operate the B-17, often referred to as the "flying fortress." A spokesman for the Army's Second Air Force command said that, "The crews at the four fields will be engaged in regular training flights to check on the accuracy of navigators and to promote teamwork among the crews. Much of their time will be devoted to practice bombing." The dispersed airfields permitted simulation of conditions in combat zones. One person compared flying over Central Montana with its lack of clearly identifiable landmarks to flying over blacked out England. Another Army spokesman explained that, "Many of the flights will be in precise formation, simulating battle conditions, when ships must be so spaced as to cover one another with guns." The skies over central Montana were filled with B-17s flying between the airfields, partaking in bombing practice, and testing long-range navigation skills.⁸

In December 1942, Major General Robert Olds, commanding officer of the Second Air Force, laid out the precise purposes of the airfields:

1. Take men individually trained in the delicate art of bombing and weld them into a combat team that works as one man. Particular stress is laid on the ability of this united team to take a four-engine bomber to any target within maximum range, day or night, fair weather or foul, over land or sea, bomb the objective successfully and present the maximum defensive fire power necessary to ward off attacks by enemy pursuits enroute.
2. The organization and training of heavy bomber squadrons and groups is next in line and here special stress is laid on the close coordination of members of combat crew teams to produce essential mass tactics.
3. The trained and organized groups are given a finishing period of training from dispersed airdromes in close simulation of actual conditions encountered in each of the many combat theaters in which American air forces are operating in the second World war today.⁹

⁷ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, November 16, 1942.

⁸ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, November 15, 1942.

⁹ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, December 17, 1942.

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No matter how the Army defined the mission of the Lewistown Satellite Air Field, a corporal stationed at the airfield and writing for the "Lewistown Airdrome Flashes", a column that appeared irregularly in the local newspaper, stated it most succinctly: "This is a place where we will learn to work together, play together, live together, fight together, and if necessary die together."¹⁰

The crews that trained in Lewistown would, when finished, fly directly to the air war in Europe. Casualties among the bomber squadrons were terribly high, and the need for new crews unrelenting. For example, the United States lost 59 aircraft on August 17, 1943 in a raid over Africa. Then in October, another 60 B-17s were lost while attempting to bomb a ball-bearing plant in Germany. In lives and dollars, the latter represented 600 men and \$20 million in planes.¹¹

Routine training flights over Central Montana also experienced their casualties. The first of these occurred on December 30, 1942 when a B-17 crashed and burned near the small town of Musselshell. All eleven crewmembers perished. Another crash in September 1943 claimed ten more men.¹²

Boundary Increase Area Significance

The historic buildings and structures within the boundary increase area played an important role in the training of the servicemen and support of the airbase. Of smaller stature than other buildings, but perhaps the most significant, was the training building. It offered classroom space, where the servicemen were taught a variety of subjects, including aircraft identification. Also housed in the training building were Link Simulators, fully equipped airplane cockpits used to replicate a variety of weather and terrain conditions. The camouflage building was used for, among other things, teaching and practicing camouflage methods for aircraft. The recreation hall served a dual purpose, to provide a space for relaxation and entertainment, but also to build camaraderie between the troops, and help "weld them into a combat team that works as one man."

The machine shop, all-purpose shop, warehouses, and motor pool all served historically to store and maintain the valuable equipment and materials used on the base. The oil storage house was constructed of glazed brick and placed relatively far from the rest of the building complex, to protect the base in case of an explosion. Other buildings and structures on the base, such as the fire pump house, storage reservoir, and elevated storage tank speak to the safety concerns and the complex utility system installed there.

Two of the buildings were constructed prior to the U.S. Army Air Corps operations at Lewistown: the old hangar and the old house. Both of these buildings were moved to their current locations. The old hangar was used by the Lewistown airport, and moved to its current site in 1939, the same year the airport's runways were

¹⁰ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, November 15, 1942.

¹¹ *Lewistown Democrat-News*, October 14, 1943

¹² *Lewistown Democrat-News*, December 31, 1942 and September 3, 1943.

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lighted. Though not constructed by the Army Corps, the building does appear on the construction plans for the base drawn in 1942. It was used as a hangar and storage area during the period of significance. It is unclear who resided in the "old house" during the U.S. Army Air Corps occupation of the airfield, and according to the 1942 plans, the house was originally located on the south side of "D" Avenue (Airport Road). A photograph of the base taken in the spring of 1943, however, shows it moved across the street next to the water tower. Clearly, the U.S. Army chose to move the building for use on the base.

Indeed, all of the historic buildings within the boundary increase area of the Lewistown Satellite Airfield Historic District contribute to our understanding of how the airbase functioned. These resources enhance the historic associations embodied in the previously listed district area, and are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

Criteria Consideration B

Two buildings and one structure were moved to their current locations within the boundary increase area. The old hangar was moved in prior to its period of significance as identified in this nomination, and therefore does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B. The "old house" moved to its current location in between November 1942 and Spring 1943, retains its associations with airfield. The water tower and old house were both moved specifically for use by the U.S. Army Air Corps, and those associations remain clear. Additionally, they constitute only a small percentage of buildings within the district, and therefore meet the requirements for Criteria Consideration B.

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Architectural and Engineering drawings for the Lewistown Satellite Airfield. Howard R. Green Co., Arcts & Engr's, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. On file at the Lewistown Airport.

"Historical Context for Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana." Prepared for 341 CES/CEVP, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana by CH2MHill. December 31, 1997.

Lewistown Democrat-News, May 6 and 25, 1942; June 16, 1942; July 3, 13, 29, and 31, 1942; August 7, 20, and 25, 1942; October 8, 14, 17, and 18, 1942; September 3, 1942; November 1, 15, 16, and 26, 1942; December 11, 17, and 31, 1942; January 2, 13, 20, and 26, 1943; September 4, 1943

Sherman, Don. "The Secret Weapon." *Air & Space Magazine*. March 15, 1999.

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UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	617180	5211440
B	12	617380	5211580
C	12	617575	5211360
D	12	617415	5211235
E	12	617250	5211440
F	12	617205	5211400
G	12	617165	5211360
H	12	617225	5211280
I	12	617085	5211185
J	12	617035	5211270

Verbal Boundary Description

The increase area includes a rectangular area that extends from the southeast side of the current historic district, to include the oil storage house and recreation hall. This rectangle is defined by UTM reference points G, H, I, and J. The new boundary line also runs northeast from the southeast corner of the original district boundary line to the intersection of "A" Avenue (Aztec Drive) and First Street (aka Stratosphere Drive) Then turns in a southeasterly direction along the northeast side of First Street (Stratosphere Drive) to its intersection with "D" Avenue (Airport Road). From the middle of this intersection, the boundary line turns northeast to parallel the northwest side of "D" Avenue (Airport Road) to the pump house, then turns to the northwest to include the warehouses at the northwest side of "A" Avenue (Aztec Drive). The boundary then turns southwest along the road behind those warehouses and continues to its intersection with the original northeast boundary line. This roughly rectangular area is defined by UTM points A-F. See attached site map.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary increase area extends from the current district boundary lines to the south and east to encompass previously unrecorded buildings and structures associated with the Lewistown Airfield and its operations as a U.S. Army Air Corps training facility. While the existing historic district encompasses those buildings associated with the flight apron functions of the airfield, the historic resources within the increase area functioned as training areas, storage and maintenance buildings, and utilities intrinsic to the overall mission and operation of the U.S. Army Air Corps facility.

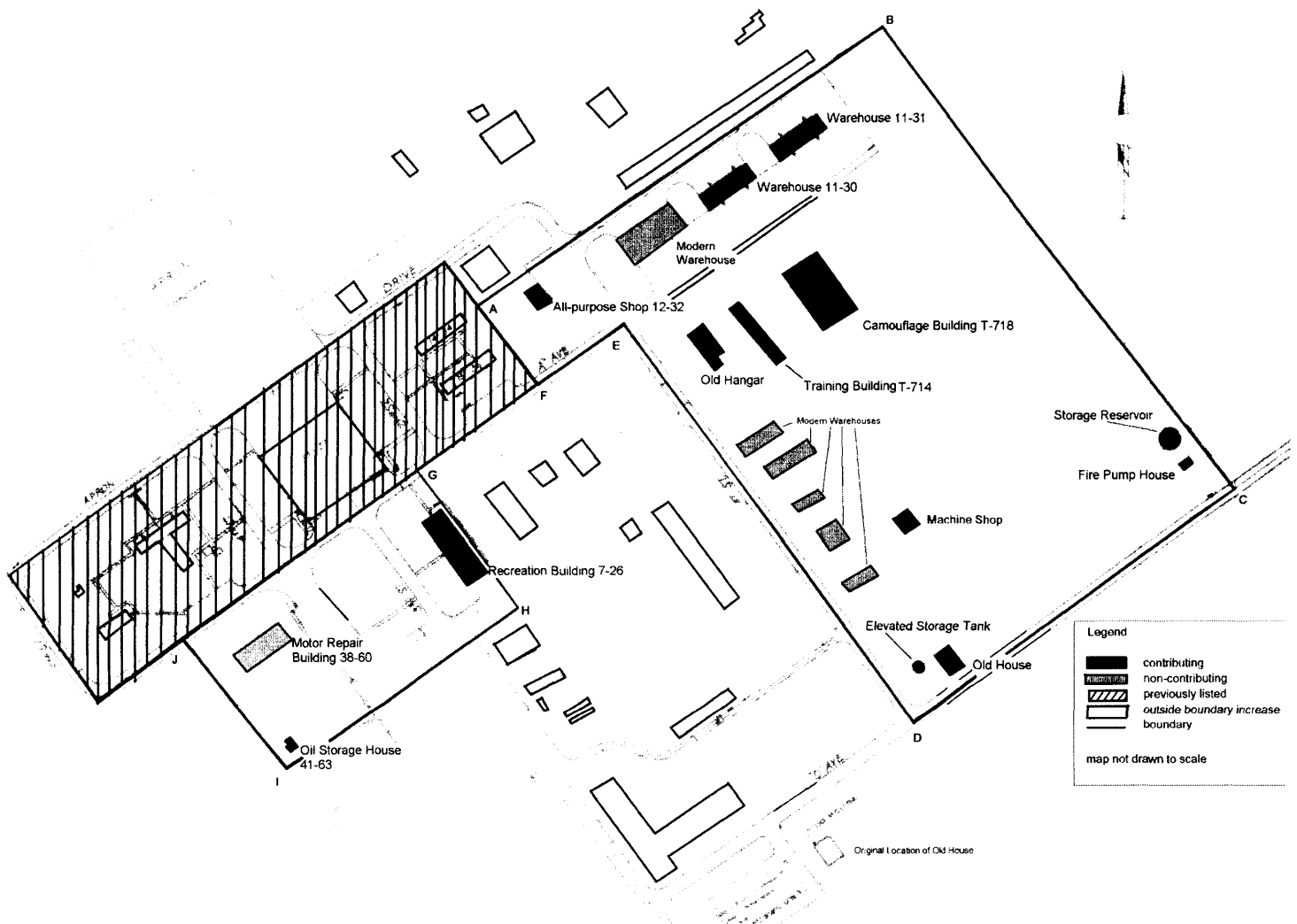
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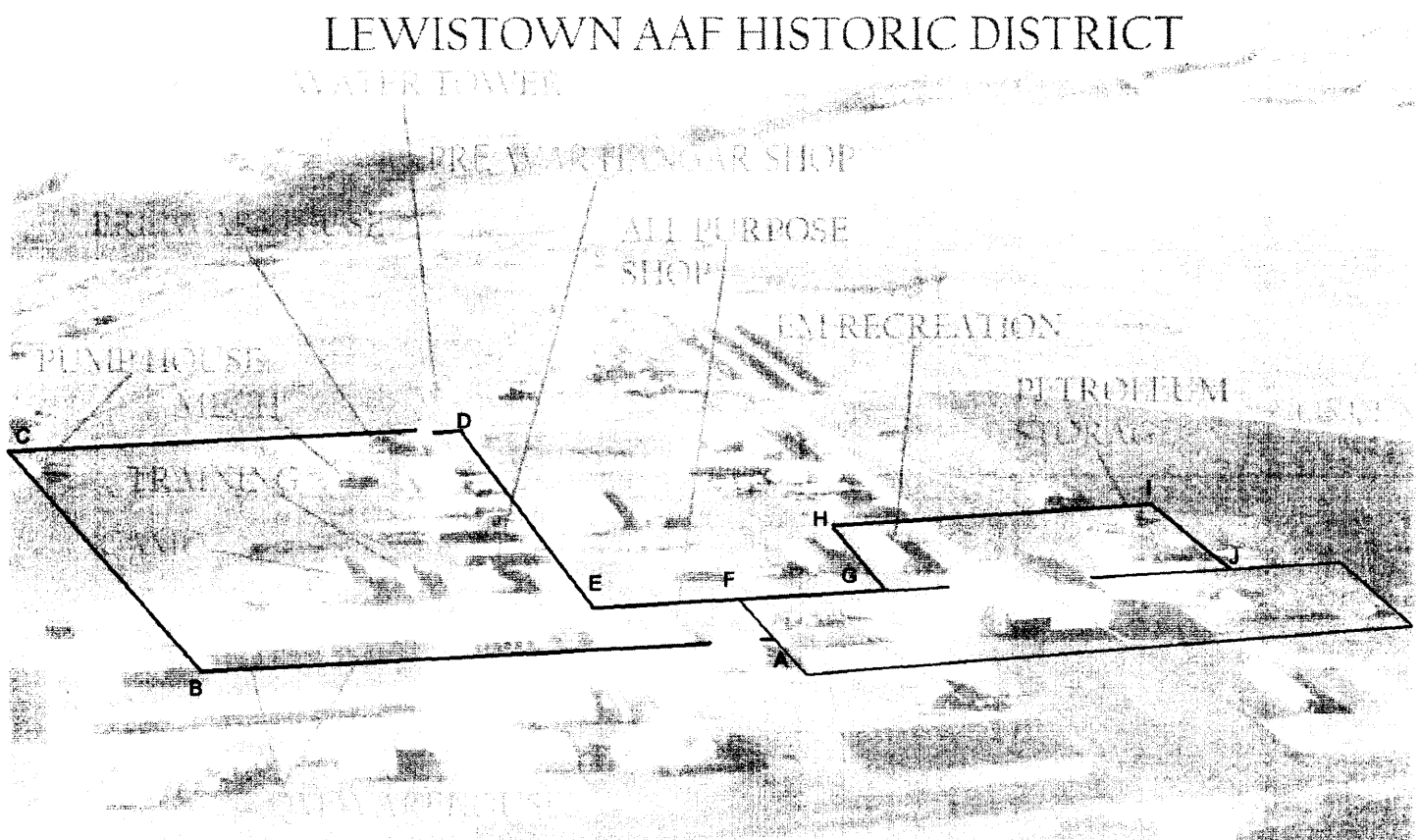
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The photographs that accompany this nomination of the Lewistown Satellite Airfield Historic District (Boundary Increase) were taken by James Rea in November 2003. The negatives are housed at the Montana State Historic Preservation Office in Helena, Montana.

Photo #1
Oil Storage House, # 41-63
View to SE

Photo # 10
Pre-War Hangar, #T-710
View to the SE

Photo #2
Oil Storage House, # 41-63
View to NW

Photo #11
Pre-War Hangar, Training Building, and Camouflage Building
View to NW

Photo #3
Motor Repair Building, #38-60
View to NW

Photo # 12
Training Building, #T-714
View to NW

Photo #4
Motor Repair Building, #38-60
View to SE

Photo #13
Training Building, #T-714
View to SE

Photo #5
Recreation Building #7-26
View to NE

Photo #14
Camouflage Building, #T-718
View to NW

Photo #6
Recreation Building, #7-26
View to SW

Photo #15
Camouflage Building, #T-718
View to SE

Photo #7
All-Purpose Shop, #12-32
View to SW

Photo #16
Warehouse, #11-30
View to SW

Photo #8
All-Purpose Shop, #12-32
View to NE

Photo #17
Warehouse, #11-30
View to NE

Photo # 9
Pre-War Hangar, #T-710
View to NW

Photo #18
Warehouse, #11-31
View to SW

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Photo #19
Warehouse, #11-31
View to NE

Photo #20
Machine Shop
View to SE

Photo #21
Machine Shop
View to NE

Photo #22
Machine Shop
View to SW

Photo #23
"Old" House and Elevated Storage Tank
View to NE

Photo #24
"Old" House and Elevated Storage Tank
View to SW

Photo #25
Fire Pump House and Storage Reservoir
View to NE

Photo #26
Fire Pump House and Storage Reservoir
View to SW

